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Executive Summary

In Michigan, more than one million people cannot afford to feed themselves or their families—10.5% of our population. Many will rely on a food bank this year to avoid malnutrition. Others will subsist on inadequate food choices that contribute to more serious health issues. Some will go hungry for lack of access to programs.

In Michigan

- One in ten people are using emergency food programs.
- Some children eat a free school lunch, but it is their only meal of the day. During the summer, many children have no guaranteed source for meals.
- Some working parents skip meals in order to better feed their children.
- Under-nourished people can be found in every city, township and county.
- We found a 29% gap between meals provided and meals needed.

The Desire to End Hunger is Worldwide

At the 1974 World Food Conference, countries pledged to eradicate global hunger within a decade. While that goal has not been met, heartening progress has been made. In industrialized countries, the United States is the only nation that still tolerates widespread hunger within its borders.

Addressing Poverty is Key to Alleviating Hunger

Poverty and lack of income are the primary reasons people become food insecure and experience hunger. Some 35 million Americans live below the poverty line and more than a million do in Michigan. As a basic human right, all people should be able to purchase the food they need. Moving toward a future where everyone enjoys that right is a realistic, affordable and morally compelling goal for Michigan.

Feasible Solutions Exist to Reduce Hunger in Michigan

1. Optimize federal food programs in Michigan

Improve and expand the national nutrition safety net programs administered in Michigan.

2. Expand nutrition education opportunities and outreach

Train and educate people to help them make healthy food choices and stretch their household food dollars.

3. Invest in and strengthen the private/non-profit service delivery network

Develop and expand localized, volunteer-based services that help engage citizens in community-based solutions to hunger and poverty.

4. Take action locally

Hunger impacts everyone in our state—not just those who are hungry. The economic and health implications for Michigan are far-reaching and need to be understood by policymakers, families, businesses and individuals.

Participate in the Solution

The fastest, most direct way to reduce hunger is to improve and expand the national nutrition programs. By working together, state and local governments, schools, non-profit organizations and other community groups can make sure that these national nutrition programs and local anti-hunger efforts best complement and build on each other and the national nutrition programs.

Problem-solvers Can Play a Positive Role

1. Federal Government

Live up to the official U.S. commitment to cut hunger and food insecurity in half by 2010 and commit to ending both by 2015.

2. State and Local Government

Optimize local use of federal nutrition programs and expand program outreach of benefits and services—especially to underserved populations, such as working-poor households, children and the elderly.

3. Schools and Community Organizations

Ensure that all eligible children receive the full range of federal nutrition assistance programs, including free and reduced-price breakfast and lunch, after-school snacks and supper, the summer meals program and the child and adult-care meals program.

4. Non-profit Groups

Work to increase public awareness of the problem of hunger in the community and advocate for policies to end hunger. Ensure that state and local governments take advantage of all federal nutrition assistance programs.

5. Business, Labor and Industry

Collaborate with government and community groups to connect low-wage worker to federal nutrition programs. Advocate for improved public policies to end hunger.

6. Individuals

Become advocates. Become involved with local anti-hunger organizations. Raise local awareness of hunger by talking to anyone and everyone.

Call to Action and Support

Now is the time to act! We know how to end hunger. We must work together to muster the political will that will move these words into action and create an America and a Michigan where all men, women and children are free from hunger.



Creating a Blueprint to End Hunger in Michigan

In Michigan, more than one million people cannot afford to feed themselves or their families—10.5% of our population. Many will rely on a food bank this year to feed themselves and avoid malnutrition. Others will subsist on inadequate food choices that contribute to more serious health issues. Some will go hungry for lack of access to programs.

Although Michigan's economy has been poor for several years, it is not an acceptable excuse for allowing a percentage of Michigan's residents to go hungry. Programs exist to help Michigan citizens who do not have enough food for themselves and their families, but those programs often fail to reach many people in need. **Hunger in Michigan is nearly invisible, known mainly to those who experience it and those who attempt to alleviate it.** It is an immense, complex issue that has several causes, and many barriers to solving it. The first is a **lack of public awareness** and a denial that such a critical and basic human need is going unmet in a state that has the resources to address it. The second is the **difficulty of mobilizing the resources** to assure that everyone who needs help obtaining adequate nutrition gets it.

Providing food for oneself and one's family is a basic human need and right. In addition to the obvious moral issue, there are economic considerations as well. **As Michigan struggles to rebuild its economic infrastructure, it cannot afford to lose the creativity and productivity of a significant portion of its population.** Those who are under-nourished have difficulty learning, earning an income or providing for a family. We can offer educational opportunities to low income people, but if they are hungry, learning will not be their priority. We can offer job training and career guidance, but if they are hungry, such help will be ignored. We can provide advanced health care to the elderly, but if they are hungry, their health will always be

compromised. Hunger is the first priority when people struggle to improve their quality of life and become self-sufficient.

In a state where agriculture and food-related businesses are the second largest industry, Michigan should be doing a better job of making sure every person is adequately fed.

In Michigan

- One in ten people are using emergency food programs because they don't have enough food
- Some children eat a free school lunch, but it is their only meal of the day. During the summer many children have no guaranteed source for meals.
- Some working parents often skip meals in order to better feed their children.
- Under-nourished people can be found in every city, county and township.

The desire to end hunger is world-wide

At the 1974 World Food Conference, countries pledged to eradicate global hunger within a decade. While that goal was not met, heartening progress has been made. The proportion of undernourished people in developing nations has been cut in half and the number of undernourished people in the world has declined. **In industrialized countries, the U.S. is the only nation that still tolerates widespread hunger within its borders.**

At the World Food Summit in 1996, the U.S. committed to an ambitious goal of cutting "food insecurity" in half by 2010. Progress in the U.S., however, has been marginal and intermittent, far below the rate needed to meet the 2010 goal. Over the years, U.S. leaders have worked in a bipartisan fashion to develop national nutrition programs with some progress, including child nutrition programs, the Food Stamp Program and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). Although these programs have been somewhat successful in serving as a bulwark against hunger, they are under-funded and fail to reach many people in need.

Addressing poverty is key to alleviating hunger

Poverty and lack of income are the primary reasons people become food insecure and experience hunger. Overcoming poverty is an overwhelming challenge. Some 35 million Americans live below the poverty line, more than a million in Michigan. Programs that support work, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit, play a crucial role in helping people transition out of poverty. While progress has been made to expand work supports, not enough is being done to address health insurance, childcare, the high cost of transportation and housing disparities.

When working poor families have to spend inordinate amounts of their limited incomes on health care, housing or child care expenses, they have even less money to spend on food. As a basic human right, all people should be able to purchase the food they need. Moving toward a future where everyone enjoys that right is a realistic, affordable and morally compelling goal for Michigan. Even though the state has limited control over federal program funding, regulations and administration, we still have opportunities to end hunger with solutions that already exist, through public programs, education and community engagement. We just need a commitment, a voice and the will to place food, nutrition and access as a top priority on Michigan's public policy agenda.

Feasible solutions exist to reduce hunger in Michigan

1. Optimize federal food programs in Michigan
2. Expand nutrition education opportunities and outreach
3. Invest in and strengthen the private/non-profit service delivery network
4. Take action locally.

First, the fastest, most direct way to reduce hunger in Michigan is to optimize, improve and expand national nutrition programs available to people in Michigan. Through food stamps (known as "food assistance" in Michigan), WIC, school meals, or through senior and childhood nutrition programs, more dollars are available to Michigan to provide million of additional meals to people in need.

Secondly, by expanding nutrition education opportunities for low-income families, we can provide training and information aimed at helping more people make healthy food choices and stretching their household food dollar.

Thirdly, knowing that government programs cannot fully address all aspects of hunger, investing in and strengthening the private/non-profit food service delivery network will result in localized, volunteer-based services that help engage citizens in community-based solutions to hunger and poverty.

Finally, the Blueprint is also intended to motivate individuals to take action locally. Hunger impacts everyone in our state, not just those who are hungry. The economic and health implications for Michigan are far-reaching and need to be understood by policymakers, families, businesses and individuals.

There are many strategies that will help achieve the solutions proposed by this Blueprint. Following are some examples:

1. Optimize federal food programs in Michigan

Federal food programs, especially food stamps, are the primary sources of food for low-income persons in Michigan. By maximizing our use of these funds, we are also ensuring that Michigan utilizes the available federal funds to address hunger in the state. It is therefore important to both invest in and strengthen the national nutrition safety net programs administered in Michigan.

- Expand outreach efforts to food stamp eligible people in order to increase participation in the program.
- Utilize options in the food stamp program that will make food stamps more available to eligible people.
- Support efforts at the federal level to preserve and strengthen federal nutrition programs to ensure that the value of these programs do not erode over time.
- Strengthen federal commodity food distribution programs.
- Provide eligible children the full range of federal nutrition assistance programs, including free and reduced-price breakfast and lunch, after-school snacks and supper, the summer meals program, and the child and adult care meals program.
- Expand Project FRESH and Senior Project FRESH to all counties in Michigan.
- Expand senior nutrition programs.

2. Expand nutrition education opportunities and outreach

Along with the food that is provided by our federal food programs, nutrition education is a critical component to ending hunger and food insecurity. USDA requires and funds nutrition education as part of the food stamp program, acknowledging the obvious relationship between knowledge and food choices. Obesity, food insecurity and hunger all are serious health problems that sometimes coexist in the same households. Food insecure families often adapt by relying on less expensive, less nutritious, high-calorie foods to stave off the sensation of hunger.

- Help people make healthy food choices with knowledge about nutrition and safe food handling.
- Help people stretch their food budgets and know how to prepare food.
- Help address obesity and other diseases through knowledge about nutrition and lifestyle choices.

3. Invest in and strengthen the private and non-profit service delivery network

- Recognize the value of and provide funding for faith-based and volunteer run emergency food programs in order to supplement the food budgets for low-income populations.
- Maintain tax credits for cash donations to emergency shelters and food banks to spur charity giving and recourses s for private sector organizations.
- Build and maintain partnerships that connect Michigan grown food and the food industry to the food bank network in order to increase consumption of Michigan produced food.
- Expand 2-1-1 service to all counties in Michigan in order to increase access to existing community-based food and nutrition services and resources.

4. Take action locally

We need to give a face to hunger in Michigan, with stories and data that explain why it exists. Creative solutions for increasing access to existing resources and delivering services needs to be customized at the local level. Local solutions are essential because of Michigan's diverse geography and cultures. But ultimately, local activity will create ownership and solutions for ending hunger.

- Establish local food security councils in order to engage citizens and leaders in identifying local needs and customizing solutions to local communities.
- Create a county-by-county report card that identifies measurable goals and progress for ending hunger locally.
- Secure support of 1,000 organizations for this blueprint to end hunger in Michigan.

Participate in the solution

The fastest, most direct way to reduce hunger is to improve and expand the national nutrition programs so they can provide people at risk of hunger with the resources they need to buy food for an adequate diet. The Food Stamp Program, which provides families with an electronic benefits transfer (EBT) card to buy food, must be improved and expanded.

Supplementary nutrition programs like the child nutrition and congregate feeding programs for the elderly, which are designed to help the most vulnerable people—children, the elderly and the disabled—also must be enhanced. And by working together, state and local governments, schools, non-profit organizations and other community groups can make sure that these national nutrition programs and local anti-hunger efforts best complement and build on each other.

Problem solvers can play a positive role

1. Federal Government

Live up to the official U.S. commitment to cut hunger and food insecurity in half by 2010, and commit to ending both by 2015.

- Invest in, protect and strengthen the national nutrition safety net.
- Ensure that states, localities and schools offer all federal food assistance programs and work actively to enroll eligible people in these programs.
- Base monthly food stamp benefits on a realistic measure of what poor households need to buy food for an adequate diet.
- Allow low-income families to participate in the Food Stamp Program without forfeiting the opportunity to save.
- Extend food stamp eligibility to more struggling low-income people.
- Expand access to child nutrition programs so that more eligible children benefit.
- Strengthen federal commodity food programs with increased funding
- Provide the WIC program with sufficient funds so all eligible people participate.
- Invest in public education to increase outreach and awareness of the importance of

preventing hunger and improving nutrition for health, learning and productivity.

2. State and Local Government

- Optimize local use of federal nutrition programs.
- Adopt policies that would expand eligibility and promote participation in the Food Stamp Program.
- Reduce the complexity and stigma of applying for food stamps and invest in outreach so that all people eligible that wish to enroll in the program get enrolled.
- Work with school districts and localities to ensure that they offer the full range of child nutrition programs.
- Expand program outreach of benefits and services, especially to underserved populations, such as working-poor households, children and the elderly.
- Invest in public education to increase outreach and awareness of the importance of preventing hunger and improving nutrition for health, learning and productivity.

3. Schools and Community Organizations

- Provide eligible children the full range of federal nutrition assistance programs, including free and reduced-price breakfast and lunch, after-school snacks and supper, the summer meals program, and the child and adult care meals program.
- Ensure that all eligible children who wish to participate are enrolled in the school meal and child nutrition programs.
- Expand the Summer Food Service Program so that all eligible children who receive free meals during the school year have access to meals in the summer.
- Invest in public education to increase outreach and awareness of the importance of preventing hunger and improving nutrition for health, learning and productivity.
- Increase access and participation in public food programs by implementing 2-1-1 service for all 83 counties of Michigan as the primary means for information and referral for the public.

4. Non-profit Groups

- Work to increase public awareness of the problem of hunger in the community and advocate for policies to end hunger.
- Ensure that state and local governments take advantage of all federal nutrition assistance programs
- Educate low-income people about their potential eligibility for nutrition assistance and help connect them with the appropriate programs.
- Monitor program performance in food stamp offices, schools and communities.
- Continue to acquire and distribute balanced and nutritious food.

5. Business, Labor and Industry

- Collaborate with government and community groups to connect low-wage workers to federal nutrition programs.
- Contribute time, money, food, warehouse space and/or transportation capacity to local anti-hunger organizations.
- Support workplace giving campaigns that target hunger.
- Advocate for improved public policies to end hunger.

6. Individuals

- Urge elected officials to do more to reduce hunger by improving and expanding the national nutrition programs.
- Become involved with local anti-hunger organizations by donating time, money and/or food.
- Raise local awareness of hunger by talking to friends and family, and working in your local community.

As we make progress toward ending hunger, it will be important to reassess these policy recommendations to make sure they continue to represent the most effective approach. The level of investment needed here will rise or fall depending on economic conditions and advances (or setbacks) in areas such as employment, work supports and over all poverty reduction.

Call to Action/Support

We urge all Michigianians to sign on to the basic elements of this **“Blueprint to End Hunger in Michigan”** as a promise to address the most basic need of all people. We know how to end hunger. Other advanced industrialized nations already have done so. Now is the time to act. We must work together to muster the political will that will move these words into action and create an America where all men, women and children are free from hunger.

Glossary of Food and Nutrition Acronyms and Abbreviations

AAA	Area Agency on Aging
CSFP	Commodity Supplemental Food Program
DHS	Department of Human Services (formerly the Family Independence Agency and the Department of Social Services in Michigan)
DHHS	Department of Health and Human Services – Federal
EBT	Electronic Benefits Transfer (also called the Bridge Card in Michigan for Food Stamps)
EFNEP	Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (operated by Michigan State University Extension)
FAP	Food Assistance Program (Michigan’s Food Stamp program)
FBCM	Food Bank Council of Michigan
FIP	Family Independence Program (Michigan’s cash assistance program)
FMNP	Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program (Michigan’s FMNP is called Project FRESH)
FRAC	Food Research and Action Center
MARS	Michigan Assistance and Referral System
MASS	Michigan Agricultural Surplus System
MDA	Michigan Department of Agriculture
MDCH	Michigan Department of Community Health
MDE	Michigan Department of Education
MSUE	Michigan State University Extension
NSLP	National School Lunch Program
OSA	Office of Services to the Aging (a division of the Michigan Department of Community Health)
Project FRESH	Michigan’s Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program
RDA	Recommended Dietary Allowance
SBP	School Breakfast Program
SFSP	Summer Food Service Program
TEFAP	The Emergency Food Assistance Program
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
WIC	Women, Infants and Children Supplemental Nutrition Program

Some Facts About Hunger in Michigan

- One in ten people in Michigan will use a food bank this year (1 million people-2006)¹
- One in nine people are participating in the food stamp program (1.17 million people-2006)²
- One in eight are living in poverty (1.24 million-2004)³
- The average monthly food stamp grant per person in Michigan is \$88²
- Food Stamps provided \$1.2 billion in food sales for retailers in Michigan in 2006²
- 12.5% of Michigan residents live at or below the poverty line, 17.3% of the Children live in poverty²
- 61% of the meals served in schools are free or reduced price⁴
- Half the babies born in Michigan will participate in WIC this year⁵
- Studies show that for each dollar spent on WIC, \$3.50 in future health care costs are prevented⁵
- Agriculture is Michigan's second largest industry with over 125 food and fiber products⁶
- Every Michigan Farmer produces enough food to feed 129 people for one year⁶
- Every \$5 in Food Stamp benefits spent generates approximately \$9.20 in total community spending⁷
- Michigan's Food Bank network distributed 65 million pounds of groceries to individuals in 2006¹
- In Michigan in 2005, more than 10% of high school students were overweight⁷
- If consumers spent an additional 10% of their at-home food budget on Michigan foods, sales of Michigan-grown foods would increase by \$730 million⁷
- If Michigan residents ate at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day, it would be approximately 100 additional pounds of fruits and vegetables consumed per adult per year. If a portion of that produce came from Michigan, it would increase produce production by approximately 78,000 acres. SOURCE: C.S. Mott Group for Sustainable Agriculture

- If Michigan farmers doubled or tripled the amount of fruits and vegetables they sell to fresh markets (such as wholesale grocery and farmers' markets), it can result in up to 1,889 in new jobs and \$187 million in new personal income. SOURCE: Michigan Land Use Institute and C.S. Mott Group for Sustainable Agriculture (from their "Eat Fresh, Grow Jobs" report)

2007 HHS Poverty Guidelines—"Federal Register," January, 2007

Persons in Family or Household	48 Contiguous States and D.C.	Alaska	Hawaii
1	\$10,210	\$12,770	\$11,750
2	\$13,690	\$17,120	\$15,750
3	\$17,170	\$21,470	\$19,750
4	\$20,650	\$25,820	\$23,750
5	\$24,130	\$30,170	\$27,750
6	\$27,610	\$34,520	\$31,750
7	\$31,090	\$38,870	\$35,750
8	\$34,570	\$43,220	\$39,750
For each additional person, add	\$3,480	\$4,350	\$4,000

¹ Food Bank Council of Michigan

² Michigan Department of Human Services

³ U.S. Census

⁴ Michigan Department of Education

⁵ Michigan Department of Community Health, WIC Division

⁶ Michigan Department of Agriculture

⁷ Michigan Food Policy Council

County-by-County Key Findings and Methodology

Key Findings

- In Michigan, there is a 29% gap between the number of meals needed and the number of meals provided to low income people (using 124% of poverty as of 2004). This is over 398 million meals, the equivalent of 6.17 meals per person per day
- At the county level, the range of meals missed per person in poverty ranges from 2.3 to 15.3, a reflection of the vast economic, demographic, resource and access differences at the local level.
- The Food Stamp Program is the obvious primary source of food for low-income people, providing approximately one billion meals each year in Michigan
- 61% of the meals provided in school are free or reduced price, but over half of the counties in Michigan have no open sites where children can go to receive free meals during the summer recess.

Assumption Hunger will end when everyone has enough to eat.

The primary question we are attempting to answer is how much food it would take to meet the needs of hungry people in Michigan. How many people and how many meals?

It is virtually impossible to measure how many people in Michigan are going hungry. What we do know is that low-income individuals are the people needing, eligible for and using food programs. And, that poverty is a key indicator of who will likely need assistance acquiring food to feed themselves and their families. We know from the Hunger in Michigan 2006 study, through interviews with emergency food clients that 70% of people using food banks are at 100% of poverty, and that 23% at 100-185% of poverty. With this understanding, we assume that low income people between 100% and as high as 185% of poverty is the population struggling to get enough food. That is the population that utilizes the many public food and nutrition programs offered in our state and nation.

And since we can only measure the food we DO provide to folks in our state, in this report, we acquired government reports and data, as current as available, as our primary measure for meals provided to this target population of low-income people.

Our general formula is meals needed – meals provided = Meals missed, or the “gap”. The “gap” gives us a general sense of how far away we are from ending hunger in each county and in Michigan.

Disclaimers

Units of service: Food programs report in various units of service: meals provided financial reimbursement and pounds distributed. In order to determine the number of meals from the programs in the report, we converted dollars spent and pounds distributed in to meals using an average cost of food (across all categories) as \$1.50 per pound and the average size of a meal as 1.33 pounds. These numbers were provided by American’s Second Harvest, the national food bank network. Where people ate meals that were smaller than 1.3 pounds or where they

purchased low-cost foods, variation in meals would occur. For instance, we know that non-perishable foods are often less expensive than perishable. People may buy “cheap” food as a strategy for extending their food budget, resulting in less variety, and often nutrition, but more food.

Other sources of food: Fortunately there are many sources of food for people in every community in our state. These sources vary, based on the local economy, agriculture, geography and service delivery access. Though we can account for the majority of food resources through government data and reporting, there is clearly more food being eaten by our target population of low-income people than we have included in our county totals. The primary sources of additional food are likely:

- Emergency food provided by local agencies, faith-based groups or service providers that operate independently of Michigan’s food bank network. The Food Bank Council of Michigan estimates that their network provides approximately 70% of all emergency food in Michigan.
- Food Stamps and the other food programs are only intended to be a supplement to the household food supply. We know that people are using some of their disposable income on food too. But it is very difficult to estimate how much income is used by this report’s target population to buy food.
- There are many, many other community resources such as home gardens, community gardens, after school programs, neighborhood and senior center programs that provide meals that are not specifically for low income individuals, but are available to neighborhoods and communities where people of all incomes live.

Lack of other sources of data: For this report, we gathered all the county level data we know exists. Without a reporting system, other sources of food can not be quantified. We certainly hope that this document will lead to the discovery of other data and information about food sources for low income people. We extend this invitation and hope to learn more about food resources in our state, so that we can evaluate and measure progress and change.

Information Sources

Michigan Department of Education
Michigan Department of Human Services
Michigan Office on Services to the Aging
Michigan Department of Community Health – WIC Division
Food Bank Council of Michigan
America’s Second Harvest

For detailed information about data sources and documentation, please contact the Food Bank Council of Michigan at 800-552-4483.

Federal Food Programs in Michigan Summary – 05/06

Program	Target Population	Income Limit	State Agency	State Funding	Federal Funding
FAP	Low-income	200% (gross)	FIA	½ admin costs	1 billion in benefits
WIC	Pregnant and postpartum women, infants & children under 5	185%	MDCH	None	\$131 million in benefits, \$34 million NSA
Project FRESH	Pregnant and postpartum women, infants and children under 5 years	185%	MDCH	30% in kind match valued at \$61,795 in FY 03	\$553,047
TEFAP	Seniors (eligibility targeted at but not limited to seniors)	130% for non-senior households; 160% for senior households	MDE	\$37,000 match	\$13 million worth of food \$1.8 million for distribution
CSFP	Pregnant and postpartum women, infants and children up to 6 yrs, people over 60	185% for all but seniors who must be 130%	MDE	None	\$16 million for food \$4.46 million for distribution
School Breakfast	Low-income children	130% for free meals; 185% for reduced-price meals	MDE	\$8.3 million	\$46 million for meals
School Lunch	Low-income children	130% free meals; 185% reduced-price	MDE	\$19.2 million	\$178 million for meals
Summer Food Service Program	Low-income children	185% of poverty or site located in area where 50+% of students have income <185%	MDE	None	\$4,035,474
Congregate Meals	Seniors	No means test	MDCH OSA	n/a	n/a
Home-Delivered Meals	Seniors	No means test	MDCH OSA	n/a	n/a
CACFP	Infants, young children, impaired adults in daycare	Site eligibility—at least 50% under 185%	MDE	None	\$51.7 million cash payments

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Center for Civil Justice

Terri Stangl, Executive Director

Michigan Department of Education

Barb Campbell

Dawn Harris

Marla Moss

Kathy Rhodes

Cheryl Schubel

Barb Strong

Gloria Zunker

Michigan Department of Community Health, WIC Division

Alethia Carr, Director

Karla Hall

Michigan Office on Services to the Aging

Sherry King, Wellness Specialist and Senior Project Fresh Coordinator

Michigan Food Policy Council

Kristin Brooks, Executive Coordinator

Michigan Alliance to Stop Hunger (M*A*S*H*)